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Letter dated 5 September 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith a commentary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on the possibility of deploying a United Nations peacekeeping operation to Donbas (see annex).

I would appreciate your kind assistance in having the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 31, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Volodymyr **Yelchenko**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 5 September 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Commentary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on the possibility of deploying a United Nations peacekeeping operation to Donbas

5 September 2017

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine takes note of the statement of the President of the Russian Federation on the possibility of deploying United Nations peacekeepers to Donbas, as published in the media. We are of the view that the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation can contribute to restoring peace and security in the east of Ukraine. It should also be noted, in this connection, that back in March 2015, the President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, formally addressed the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council with a request to deploy, in the territory of the country, a peacekeeping operation under United Nations auspices. That letter was circulated on 2 April 2015 as a document of the Security Council (S/2015/225). Prior to that, the initiative of the President of Ukraine had been supported by the National Security and Defence Council and the Verkhovna Rada (parliament) of Ukraine.

The objective of such an operation would be to guarantee lasting peace in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine on the basis of the Minsk agreements and in line with the fundamental principles and norms of the Charter of the United Nations, in parallel with enhancing the capacities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine.

Russia, the aggressor State, has since endeavoured to sabotage Ukraine's proposals and refused to consider our request to the Security Council; it even claimed, as was the case in June 2016, that Ukraine had never addressed such a request to the Security Council.

Ukraine's stance in this regard has always been clear: any international peacekeeping presence should be deployed upon agreement of and after exhaustive consultations with the Ukrainian side, provide for the removal of all occupation forces and mercenaries as well as their weaponry from the territory of Ukraine and ensure reliable control over the Ukrainian-Russian border in order to prevent Russian military, arms, equipment and mercenaries from getting into the territory of Ukraine. In case a decision is taken to deploy a peacekeeping operation, any presence of military or other personnel of the aggressor State in the territory of Ukraine under the guise of peacekeepers should be ruled out, as it is inconsistent with the basic principles of United Nations peacekeeping. Similarly out of the question is getting an agreement to deploy a peacekeeping operation from illegal armed groups in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine that are supported, financed and equipped by the Russian Federation.

The statement of the President of the Russian Federation, as published in the media, is additional evidence of the efforts of Russia, as a party to the conflict, to present the aggression as an internal Ukrainian conflict and to distort the very idea and purposes of such a peacekeeping operation; this will not serve its main objective, namely to establish lasting peace in Donbas and restore the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

At the same time, Ukraine continues to consistently support the initiative to deploy a United Nations peacekeeping operation to Donbas and is ready for further work on this issue. In this connection, the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations has been tasked with conducting consultations with the members of the Security Council.

It is also our position that consistent adherence by the Russian side to the regime of a lasting and complete ceasefire, as agreed at the end of August and in connection with the start of the school year, should create a favourable precondition for starting a dialogue on deploying a peacekeeping operation to Donbas.